

THE CULTURE OF THE LEFT

By E. MERRILL ROOT

FRANK HARRIS once wrote, "Nations, like fish, go rotten first at the head." In the crucial hour wherein we live, when the destiny of man and the existence of the Republic are in peril, let us ponder this thought: *decay begins first in the head.*

That is why Communism, functioning merely on the outer plane of economics and politics, is relatively innocuous as compared with Communism spreading spiritual nihilism through the senses and the soul by the Culture of the Left. Klaus Fuchs giving the secrets of the atom bomb to the enemy is not so lethal as one first-rate artist infecting the unsuspecting American people with cynicism, despair, negation and the virus of death.

Our greatest danger lies in the fields of education, journalism, art, music, literature — in the stealthy yet steady invasion (through all these) by a secret and subtle destroyer. There are still brave men who would rise up with rifles against an open invader, or who would rise up with votes against a demagogue of the *political* Left. But even they are confused and corroded, day after day, by a constant aesthetic destruction of spiritual morale — by a perpetual drip, drip, drip from the faucets of acidulous propaganda. They read "smart" magazines that eat away the foundations of their faith; they join book clubs that specialize in tomes toxic with nihilism; they see plays that degrade their minds with crafty doubletalk. Most Americans do not realize — as Communists do — that ours is a total war, fought with every word we say (or listen to), every note of music that strengthens the soul with Beethoven or every picture that disintegrates the mind with Dali, every poet who destroys our will to live by the lie that the world "ends not with a bang but a whimper".

What use is it to cram our arsenals with guns, to clutter our hangars with jet fighters, if we open our minds to a spiritual attack? We prepare to defend ourselves in a physical war which Communism hopes never to have to fight, while we disarm ourselves intellectually, opening the spiritual doors to the "smiler with the knife" who destroys our belief in ourselves, our faith in values, and our will even to *be*. We post guards with rifles at the outer walls, and then sit down with invited enemies in tuxedos who joke with us as they pour cyanide into our wine.

WHAT GOES ON IN THE Culture of the Left, day in, day out, to make us (as Elizabeth Bentley said her education made her) “pushovers for Communism”? A while ago there was a hullabaloo in Ohio over a group of singers known as “The Weavers”. A protest, spearheaded by that splendid fighter, Roger Sherwood of Middletown, Ohio, opposed and exposed them, and stopped their appearance at the Ohio State Fair. There was the usual stupid uproar not only among “liberals” (whose conflict with Communism is always a *lovers’* quarrel), but even among naively ignorant conservatives. It was (they said) a “witch-hunt” against “innocent artists”.

The truth is now known to all but the resolute fools who stop their ears with the wax of prejudice: the “innocent artists”, for example, fashioned the catchiest of tunes for the catchiest of words, and sold the records thus made as pure art. But one of these “pure art” records relates, most fascinatingly, how the miners’ children peak and pine and die in shabby ways — while “the banks are made of marble” and the bankers’ children are fat and fine. It then prophecies the day when you and I shall arise to expropriate the expropriators and live ourselves in marble halls. Hatred, greed, violence, explosive jealousy, ignorant destruction, are sugar-coated with art and fed to the American people. And this sort of thing goes on, day come white or night come black, all over America. This is the cold war that is always hot.

Therefore it is necessary to clarify the mind and fortify the soul of America against the prevalent, disguised, largely triumphant, Culture of the Left. It is not (*as yet*) a fully Communist culture — but it is a culture of negation, despair, mockery, nihilism, a culture full of the virus of spiritual polio. If it succeeds, we shall have no faith to oppose and no will to fight the physical tanks and battalions of Communism that will therefore consolidate a bloodless war. Our defeat will come from our dead souls, our murdered souls; or our victory will come from our brave souls that *live*.

Spiritual mobilization will save the ramparts we watch only when a majority of Americans begin to chant Walt Whitman and to quote Robert Frost, or when they say with Thoreau: “There is more day to dawn. The sun is but a morning star.”

LET US ANALYZE THE Culture of the Left. There are the Brainy Boys in Poetry. Often, they simply destroy all tradition and continuity of culture; they corrode clear expression and splinter noble reason into the nonsense gibberish of the Cult of Unintelligibility; they sap the will to live by hypnotizing us with black magic into the belief that we are only “the hollow men, the stuffed men, leaning together”. They have a tremendous power of infection in all intellectual, and especially in all academic, circles.

Sometimes they directly attack our American foundations. Such is the darling of Harvard, Archibald MacLeish, who in his bleak verse stands America on her head. In his latest volume, *Collected Poems*, he uses a long play-poem ("The Trojan Horse") to invert the noble classic symbol into its silly and lethal opposite. Instead of seeing the horse as it was and is, a trick to destroy our truth, a secret treachery, he sees it as a gesture of conservative Trojans to "make official patriots" out of their fellows, to sweat out "public love by law", to make Trojans "fear each other". Evidently, in Troy, Mr. MacLeish would have gagged Cassandra and ogled the Greeks!

And in "The Black Day" he looses his venom upon "the country where informers thrive" (America?) — which must mean that he attacks Whittaker Chambers (as he would have attacked the Saul who became Paul), or Elizabeth Bentley and Bella Dodd. On the other hand, he praises the at best misled and at worst mis-minded Laurence Duggan, as a "pure heart, sweet spirit" who was "humble, loyal, true". It is an odd Hell into which today's poets try to lead us; one should remember that the incomparably greater Dante pictured an incomparably truer Hell, at the bottom of whose cycles *traitors* lie forever in ice, their crystal fetters of zero!

Then there are the nihilists of prose. Usually they are the "realists" ignorant of reality, the "naturalists" who know only a sub-nature. They project a world of the naked and the dead, that knows little of the Here because it knows nothing of Eternity. Its peculiar trick is to destroy truth by exposing man as a mere amoeba of the spirit, and then to pour acid on him to make him squirm out agonized pseudopodia. The result is a caricature of the cosmos. Yet it is so conventional a cliché that — under its shadow — an ignorant young novelist wrote a letter to the *New York Times* to state solemnly that nobody today can find "joy" any more anywhere in the world. So the new Aesthetic Puritans, the new Jonathan Edwardses of prose, see Hell paved with the skulls of humanity!

Death of a Salesman is the most successful time-bomb of this sort yet planted under America. Thousands see it, applaud it, even as they might enjoy oysters dredged out of contaminated waters; but few of them read what it says or understand what it means. Are Americans as stupid as Communists think they are — acquiescing in their own death, even paying for a seat at their own funeral? For here Miller deliberately mocks greatness and pares down heroism by the maudlin line: "A small man can be just as exhausted as great man."

To be sure, a greyhound chasing a mechanical rabbit can be just as "exhausted" as Beethoven after composing the "Eroica" or as Christ in Gethsemane — but the whole meaning of human life lies in observing the *difference* in the cause and quality of that "ex-

haustion". And from the petty level of sneering at American advertising, at manufacturers (who design things to wear out just as the last time payment is completed!), at businessmen (who all lust to kick an old employee in the teeth), up to the level of mocking at the worst American ideal as if it were the best American ideal, our life as a whole is reduced to a mindless, meaningless dreary-go-round.

The play, of course, belongs to the Culture of the Left. And the critics of the Left have sold it deliberately to many who ought to know better — because the Left sees all of America in the pathetic, drab, shambling Willie Loman, wishes to see America also commit suicide, and wants to be the smug mortician who supervises the embalming and burial of the hated corpse.

FORTUNATELY, many Americans already love and seek the life-sustaining Culture of the Right. They love *South Pacific* and *Oklahoma*; they know the greatness of Robert Nathan's *Portrait of Jennie*; they sustain their souls with the earth-tanged, resilient, life-rich poetry of Robert Frost; they acclaim the brave power of Taylor Caldwell. But beyond such natural turning toward the inner sun of truth and life, what shall we do to be saved?

First, let us all *read what we read* and understand that artists *mean what they mean*. Then, having candidly seen what the artist says, accept whatever by "steady faith . . . withholds the time straying toward infidelity" (as Walt Whitman says), and "dismiss whatever insults your own soul". Drop your subscriptions to "smart" magazines; resign from book clubs that publicize nihilism; let the pages of every book that makes for death moulder unread in library or bookstore.

Second, let the great papers and periodicals of the Right stop their stupid practices of anti-Communism on the editorial page and pro-Communism on the literary page. Let them scrutinize their reviewers, and *employ only those who can recognize Communism and the Left anywhere*, and not just in uniform with the Red Star on the cap. America will be destroyed, if she is destroyed, not by political propagandists, but by ignorant book reviewers and unsophisticated sophisticates of culture.

And third, yet perhaps first and also last, let Americans realize that if much of literature today is an aesthetic disease, it is *our fault*: we can always refuse to buy bad books, and can make it profitable for writers to write, and publishers to publish, good books!

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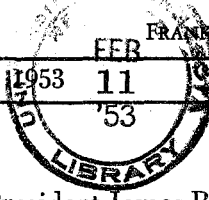
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Shadow Over Germany: The appointment of Harvard President James B. Conant to the post of United States High Commissioner to Germany has stirred up a storm in Washington in the last forty-eight hours beside which the uproar over the naming of GM President Charles E. Wilson seems like a squall in a teacup. But the situation is muffled behind committee doors, in "executive" sessions, in hush-hush diplomatic discussions where every effort is made to keep the whole matter quiet.

Foreign diplomats, desirous of building a European army as a barrier against Red expansion in Western Europe, privately make no bones of their qualms about the appointment of Conant. They say that if Conant serves as U.S. commissioner over free West Germany, the Red Enemy will be enormously helped in his activities to stir up trouble among the Germans in western occupation zones. They deplore what they regard as a serious mistake by the new Eisenhower administration and believe that the new President has some very dangerous advice. Why? Here is the story:

It dates back to 1944, when the Nazi hordes were reeling back into Germany and seemed certain to be defeated. In the spring of that year, the Kremlin (far-seeing as usual) sent orders to its network of spies in America outlining Russia's plans for Germany. These plans laid down a program of de-industrialization, of the destruction of German industry — in short, what later became known as the infamous Morgenthau Plan. One of the spies receiving them was Harry Dexter White, assistant to Henry Morgenthau, Secretary of the Treasury. He sold the gullible Morgenthau on the scheme. Every decent political figure opposed the plan — Secretary of War Stimson, Secretary of State Hull, French and British leaders. But there were others who approved of it and did what they could to boost it. One of them was President Conant of Harvard.

On October 7, 1944, Conant addressed the Foreign Policy Association and urged that, in the interests of post-war tranquility, the military potentials of Germany and Japan be decreased by cutting down the amount of industry in those countries. He said: "Not until the generation now unborn has grown up will it be possible to have changed the German and Japanese people." He laid special stress on Germany, advocating a "drastic change in the German industrial scene" and adding that a "considerable degree of redistribution of European industry will be required". He insisted on this policy of destruction of German industry "even if these measures require a reorientation of the economic balance of the world". The policy he advanced is obviously that of what was later called the Morgenthau Plan, stigmatized by Secretary Hull as "blind vengeance" and, following a try-out of several years, dropped; but only after causing severe hardships to the German people. (Harry D. White, the Russian agent, was present at the FPA meeting when Conant spoke.)

Today, Conant is proposed for a job which requires working harmoniously with the Germans and winning their cooperation in European defense. Yet, his recorded support of the Morgenthau Plan offers the Soviets an excellent propaganda weapon. The Germans hate the Morgenthau Plan, and nothing will be easier for Red propagandists than to block the diplomacy of the new High Commissioner.

That is why foreign diplomats in Washington say that Conant is unfitted for his assignment to Germany and that is why — as we go to press — Senators are developing grave doubts that they should vote for his confirmation.

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State of Nation: President Eisenhower's address was widely and justifiably praised. Some conservatives — dubious about a few points — readily conceded that it was so much better than such addresses since 1932 that they were happy. The highlights deserve varying estimates, as follows:

- (1) Much the best was Ike's friendly deference to Congress as a co-equal branch of the Government.
- (2) Economic review — generally sound.
- (3) Foreign policy. Excellent tactics in making foreign aid contingent on real "shoulder-to-wheel" attitude on part of recipient nations.
- (4) Formosa. Decision to free Chiang's troops for raids on China mainland valuable principally as a later threat to Red Armies. The latter will have to tie down many soldiers in China who otherwise would be fighting in Korea. No real invasion of China by Chiang expected soon — his army is not equipped in sufficient numbers for full-scale action.
- (5) Apparent repudiation of Yalta. Good psychological warfare blow at Russia.
- (6) Labor. Suits Taft forces. (Reports that Taft persuaded Ike to remove two pro-union points in this section of the speech.)
- (7) Slap at McCarran Immigration Law unjustified and unacceptable to Congress. Result of influence of eastern "liberals" in the new Administration.
- (8) Social Security. Dangerous and costly flapdoodle. (See our piece of September 24, 1952.) But Ike is no more blind and uninformed on this subject than most of the legislators, or of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.
- (9) Dropping of price and wage controls — excellent, specific, uncompromising.

Cutting Bureaucracy: The first, genuine planned attempt to reduce the swollen bureaucratic establishment has commenced in the Department of Agriculture. Secretary Ezra Benson ten days ago announced a reorganization program which was greeted at first with cynical shrugs. As the days passed, however, alarm spread among the government employees, as many found themselves without jobs. It should be explained that the Benson scheme involved — not outright firing — but abolition of jobs. By this method (forecasted sometime ago by HUMAN EVENTS) the Secretary was effectively able to "fire" without transgression of civil service "protective" regulations. In the past 48 hours, word about the elimination of hundreds of bureaucrats has circulated throughout the Capital.

Yesterday evening, we attended a social gathering which included "middle bureaucrats". Conversation turned on the reported dismissal of a famous Government economist and statistician, Dr. Louis Bean of the Department of Agriculture. Dr. Bean won much newspaper fame by his regular, four-yearly predictions of Democratic victories in general elections. After the Benson reorganization, Bean found himself without a job. He therefore reportedly applied to another division of the Department, the head of which said he had no job for him. The latter, then, reportedly said he might insist on "bumping". This is a term to describe a process (necessitated by civil service regulations) by which he could secure a job of economist, but would "bump" a whole line of economists of lesser rank; the result would be that one of these would lose his job, while Bean would get a place, although of lower rank.

The Benson plan, it is believed, will work out (after much "bumping" and other methods) so that by the end of the year personnel cuts amounting to about 20 per cent will have resulted. There are over 62,000 full-time employees of Agriculture. Observers believe at least 10,000 may be eliminated this year. The Benson scheme is one carefully prepared several years ago by farm organizations, long concerned with the size of the Department.

Election Studies: Since November, some careful examination of the election figures has altered conclusions reached hastily at the time. For instance, the phrase "Ike landslide" has come in for revision. HUMAN EVENTS showed (November 12, 1952) that the victory was not a "landslide" in terms of popular votes, although it was so in terms of electoral college votes. Ike won 55% of the popular vote, decisive but nevertheless not comparable to the 65% won by Harding in 1920, 63% by Coolidge in 1924,

etc. Now, within the past few days, the GOP Congressional Committee has released a study on the vote in House elections which modifies earlier judgments.

Since November, students have assumed that there was a vast disparity between the vote for Eisenhower and the vote for GOP candidates for Congress. The Democrats obtained a total of 28,585,711 votes for their candidates in the House, to 28,346,500 for Republicans. Meanwhile, Eisenhower received 33,927,549 votes as against 27,311,316 votes for Stevenson. The disparity seems, indeed, very large, on this basis.

But the Congressional committee believes that this is not a fair analysis of the figures. Mr. William S. Warner, secretary of the committee, has taken another tack in interpretation. He notes that there were only 345 (out of the total of 431) congressional districts where real contests were held. (In the "one-party" South, for instance, in almost all districts there was only one party candidate, Democratic, running in the November elections.) In the 345 contested districts, the Republicans won a total vote of 26,936,801 to the Democrats total of 23,654,283.

Mr. Warner of the congressional committee believes that the "uncontested district" votes should be deducted in order to get a clearer picture of the result. Thus, on this more equitable basis, the GOP appears as a winner by 53.5% in the contested districts. And thus, also, it appears that Eisenhower did not outpace his party by any large margin.

Names! Names! Names! You know at least two people — maybe twenty — who ought to be reading HUMAN EVENTS. Please send us their names and addresses, so that we can tell them about this publication.

Worried Educators: Two big meetings were held on January 20, one in Denver, Colo., the other in Washington, D.C. These meetings were unrelated, but each served as a sounding board for an increasing concern of the educational fraternity about the number of attacks made on the educational system by groups of citizens and by legislators.

In Denver, 600 educators, civic leaders, industrialists and others met as representatives of the National Citizens Commission for the Public Schools; the chairman is Roy E. Larsen, President of Time, Inc. The *New York Times* reports that they spoke for "8,000 citizens committees . . . founded to work for better schools in this country". And Mr. Larsen said such groups were being formed "at a rate of 250 a month". He failed to say who is sponsoring these groups, and the impression left by the newspaper story is that this is a "grass-roots campaign". But, as everybody above high school age knows, even mass movements have to be organized and directed. We can surmise the purpose of the organizers of this presumably spontaneous movement from the following excerpt from Mr. Larsen's speech:

"Where the *responsible* citizens have taken the lead to improve our schools, there is not a field for *destructive* forces . . . The citizen groups have put into proper perspective the attacks of a *vocal minority*." (Emphasis supplied.) There you have it. Whoever is sponsoring these citizen groups is annoyed by the "destructive" attacks on modern education by "vocal" minorities. This only goes to show that a small group of people who know what they want and are articulate about it can play havoc with entrenched authority.

The Washington gathering was held under the aegis of the American Council of Education. The Council, the report tells us, has in its membership 79 national and regional educational associations and 63 associate organization members; it is "highly regarded as the voice of high education in policy matters". Two problems were on the agenda: educational television and "increasing public understanding of education". The latter stirred up the most interest. Dr. Arthur S. Adams, President of the Council, deplored the fact that "the professional development of the educational process has somehow gotten out

of touch with the public it serves". The facts, he declared, should be made "plain to the American people". This sounds like a lame admission that the fuss being kicked up by parents and taxpayers about education must be considered by the "experts" who run the system.

In short, the entrenched professionals are worried. Why? Because a few conscientious Americans are asking questions.

A Boss Is a Boss Is a Boss: Labor columnist Victor Riesel gives comfort to all "bosses" who feel their best intentions and efforts are at times not fully appreciated. He reports in his syndicated columns that the CIO office union which services Walter Reuther's UAW-CIO office in Detroit cast their votes against Walter Reuther in the recent balloting for a new CIO president.

He also reports that the CIO office union which services Allan Haywood's office in Washington voted against Allan Haywood in the same election. [Haywood, another union boss, opposed Reuther's election.] Riesel's conclusions — ". . . a boss is a boss is a boss". (From General Electric Employee Relations Newsletter.)

The Pamphlet Front: So long as there is a privately owned printing press in the country, and a free market for paper, the march of the collectivist idea will not have easy going. For, blocking its path will always be the pamphlet — that stubborn and intrepid volunteer soldier of the opposition. He is constantly bobbing up in these days of social strain, sometimes well-equipped, sometimes with little more than an incoherent cry of protest; but, whether good or bad, the pamphlet does a valiant job for freedom. Among the good pamphlets we have recently seen are the following:

Do You Dare to be Different, by Kenneth W. Sollitt. Published by The Foundation for Economic Education, Irvington-on-Hudson, N.Y. Single copy free.

The Other Plot to Destroy Our Constitution, by Edgar W. Waybright, Sr. Published by the author, 305 Law Exchange Building, Jacksonville, Fla. Ten cents.

Wisdom the Hard Way, by Clark and Rimanoczy. Published by American Economic Foundation, 295 Madison Ave., New York. Single copy free.

Churchill and Baruch: The following, rather original view of two famous friends appears in a letter to the editor of the weekly London *Truth* (January 23):

"The visits of a British Prime Minister to the United States appear now invariably, and as if by established tradition, to begin with a visit to a private person there, Mr. Bernard Baruch. This is a new practice in our generation, and, on the present occasion, appears especially incongruous.

"Messrs. Churchill and Eisenhower both derive Office from Conservative votes. There seems no relevant reason for them to discuss American and British State policy at the home and under the aegis of Mr. Baruch. From such statements as he occasionally makes, he appears to be, in global affairs, an internationalist, and, in domestic ones, a Socialist. He has consistently recommended the reduction of national sovereignty in the greater field, and the imposition of controls in the American domestic one. Thus he appears to be not a believer in national or individual liberty, which is the root-principle of Conservative belief, but an opponent thereof. He has sometimes gone very far in recommending a supreme supranational authority, answerable to none, but equipped with a terrible swift sword.

"Apart even from that, Mr. Churchill's experiences with these personal expeditions have not been very happy. On one such, he signed the iniquitous Morgenthau Plan, and later expressed regret. On another, he endorsed the Unconditional Surrender demand; speaking from memory, and subject to correction, I fancy he later repented that, too . . ."

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